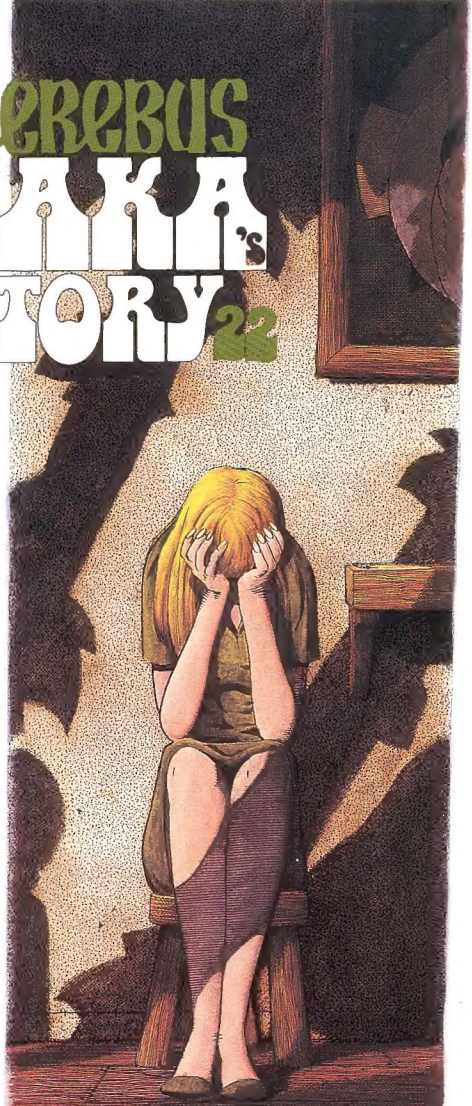
ISSN 0712-7774

CEREBUS

JAKA'S STORY 22

$2.00 USA • $2.50 CANADA • £1 UK



135
JUN

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

Well. Hey. I guess there's really not too much to say. Rough last couple of days where I just couldn't figure out why I didn't like the pacing on this issue. I've had the last two written for a while now, but I just didn't like the 'hurry-up offense' feeling I got reading through the dialogue. Finally figured out yesterday that the two-page "Happy Birthday" spread was in the wrong place. I had it on pages 12 and 13 and I just couldn't compress pages 3 through 11 any tighter or drop any more panels and it was still a page or two over. By contrast the end bit was getting too wordy. Then I figured out that if 12 and 13 were actually 16 and 17, everything fit like a glove. Pretty simple solution, but it made, as I say, for a rocky couple of days. While I was trying (and *not* trying) to figure it out, I drew pages 1 and 2 and my part of the cover for 135 and 136. Also the Buyer's Guide, the Comics Journal, Amazing Heroes and Comics F/X all came in the same day (yesterday May 23) which means half a day lost reading and the other half lost drinking to forget how grisly the comics world is becoming (brr). And then Wee Colleen phones from Va. to bounce a few more ideas off your obedient servant. I can't exactly be *encouraging* about self-publishing (especially not after reading CBG, the Journal and Amazing Heroes) but certainly if anyone has what it takes to beat the odds it would be the Divine Ms. Doran, what with an inventory of her own work (*owned* by her), revenues from the Little Two (or one of the Little Two), an established name in the field and a known (A Distant Soil) 'pr***ct'. She's already talked to a few of the distributors and no one thinks its a terrible idea. She has *two* fan clubs (!) full of people who are going to do everything they can to help her out. Me? I'm looking forward to lots of neat photos and behind-the-scenes stuff; and to what Colleen will have to tell us all (in her own diminutive yet pugnacious way) about what pissed her off *this* month. There's a certain Senator from Virginia you can count on getting an earful from WAP (writer, artist, publisher) Colleen, at the very least.

★★★★★★★★★★

Another friend-of-us-all, Mr. Martin Wagner of Godforsaken, Texas' Double Diamond Press writes and asks me to thank all of you who wrote for their sample *Hepcats* issue. He's still getting requests, even as we speak, which is great. Just great. Cash flow problems assail and beseige him but *Hepcats* 5 just came in and it serves me right for all the cliff-hanger endings in *Cerebus*. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT!!!

★★★★★★★★★★

Jeff Nicholson *is* doing a 'Habitrails' story in *Taboo* 5; Steve sent up the outline which I liked a lot. It's going to be the 'Jarhead' sequence so I lost the fifty cents I bet on Steve picking 'The Gerbil King'.

★★★★★★★★★★

Okay. That's enough. Back to the salt mines. Later.

CEREBUS

NO. 135 JUNE 1990

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Vice-President

MONIQUE KAPTEIN
Administrative Assistant

JAKA'S STORY
a novel

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PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 114)

•

POGROM'S PROGRESS
(Cerebus 115 to Cerebus 119)

•

THE POET
(Cerebus 120 to Cerebus 130)

•

MYSTERY ACHIEVEMENT
(Cerebus 131 to Cerebus 136)

•

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IN THE NEXT moment, he snapped his fingers and the room was instantly aswarm with individuals bearing thin cardboard boxes of various sizes and shapes. He snapped his fingers once more and the surrounding air bristled with a bonfire-like cacaphony of rustling tissue; tissue flying in every direction; tissue giving birth to an unimaginable selection of elegant and (to Jaka's discerning eye) expensive garments. Each of the attendants, in his turn, stepped forward; holding forth for the approval of the florid gentleman a camisole of almost unearthly beauty; sheer stockings and fine, delicate garters interwoven with bright metal; exotic body-wraps and fastenings; several heavy, lace crinolines and petticoats. That accomplished, each item was positioned on the young girl's frame under the master tailor's strict supervision.

At last The Dress itself was presented to her for *entrée* (it's *living* attractive enough from the brief glimpse she had of it) and, in a very few moments, the bedroom was empty save for herself, Nurse and the florid gentleman, who sewed, swiftly and silently, the few remaining seams so that the bodice followed the line of the child's torso to perfection.

Once she was sewn into her clothing, gloves appeared as if from nowhere and rode smoothly into place along her forearms; shoes, which pinched the insteps of both her feet, were installed and then a lipstick (contained in a singularly ugly tube) was dabbed lightly at her top and bottom lips. Next, a cape, with a heavily starched collar was thrown across her shoulders, causing an almost immediate itching sensation at the base of her neck.

Snatching up a small purse from the mounds of tissue which littered the floor, Nurse (with a theatrical flourish) filled it with a few coins and a delicately embroidered handkerchief, and then pressed it into the child's right hand.

"We go now" said the florid gentleman, grasping Jaka's right elbow in his left hand and steering her out into the hall.

AND 'GO' THEY did, hastening along the corridors of the third floor almost at a run; racing, so that the suites flew past them; racing, so that in scant seconds they were approaching the antiquitous doors of polished bronze which marked the boundary between the Tavers Residences and the Grandlord's Offices of Government. The doors had always been locked whenever Jaka had explored the third floor environs, but on *this* occasion the right hand door swung smoothly and silently inward at the florid gentleman's touch.

Suddenly, they were through the portal and had entered an altogether different and quite miraculous world.

The ceiling of glass and intricate ironworks loomed distantly overhead; massive sculpted works of art flanked them as they proceeded; rich tapestries hung in rows as far as the eye could see and the walls and floors seemed cut from a single slab of luminous, white marble, etched with soaring bas-relief figures and *tableux* from Palnu's long and illustrious history. The sweet, cloying scent of power hung lightly, elusively, enticingly in the air. The *atmosphère*, itself, seemed rarified, here, and the silence was a whispered thunder assailing the child with the full force of its quietude.

The corridor narrowed, now, and the silence took on an insectival hum which seemed to rise and swell even as the gas lighting became more brilliant. The florid gentleman turned sharply to the right and, suddenly, mere metres away, there stood the massive ebony doors of the Office of the Grandlord framed by immense stone lions, easily three times Jaka's height. The florid gentleman hastily informed Jaka that she was being announced presently and further stated that after she heard the sound of a bell, the doors would open before her and she was to walk straight ahead into Lord Julius' Office. Then he smiled at her for the first and only time in their brief acquaintanceship, pushed her gently, but firmly towards the doors and released his grip on her elbow.

Heart pounding, Jaka took a first wobbling step forward, turning, so as to regard her reflection in one of the floor-to-ceiling mirrors which lined the short hallway.

SHE FROZE THERE, then, in that moment, in mid-step and mid-thought.

"Mama?" she thought to herself (quite incongruously for she had not thought of her mother in many years). Her throat was suddenly dry, her eyes disbelieving or (more precisely) not daring to risk belief, as she regarded the splendid young woman looking back at her; as she regarded the magnificent cream and white creation which was her gown; as she regarded the glittering cape, gleaming white against the wine-red paper of the walls which surrounded her; as she regarded the intricate gold threads which curved up from her waist across the line of her rib cage, opening wide across her bosom; as she regarded the elegant sweeping folds of her skirt which fell precipitously from her slender hips, swaying evenly in response to the slightest movement of her legs.

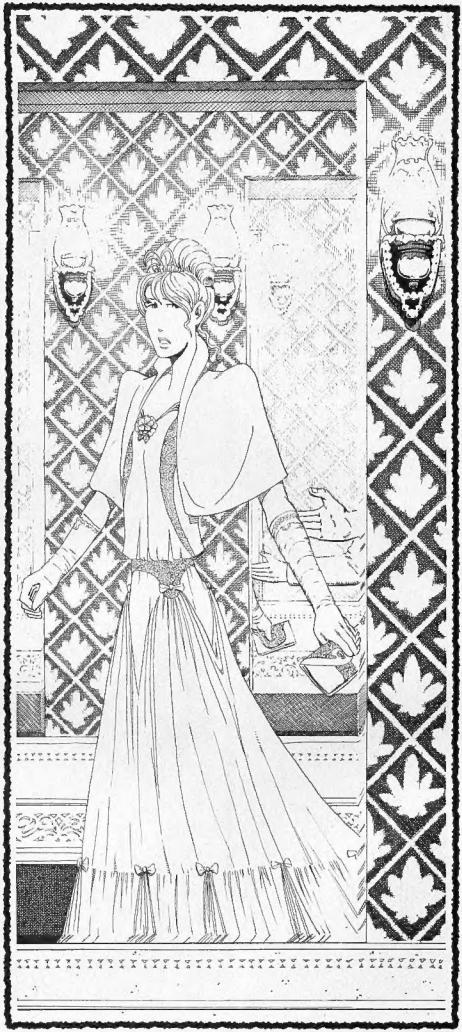
She saw no hint or trace, there, of the 'clumsy great beanstalk' she had so dreaded facing. Her ears seemed altogether ear-sized; her neck a neck of unexceptional proportion.

"I'm pretty," she thought then, suprised at her own heresy, recognizing it as a refutation of the self-loathing which had been the centerpiece of her existence up to that moment.

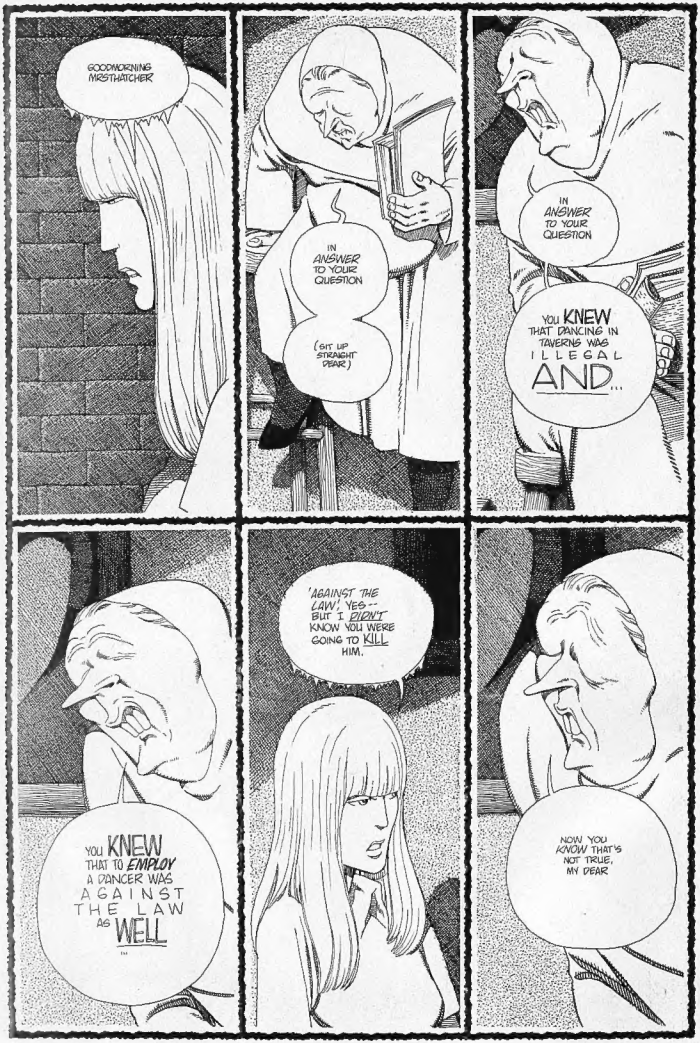
"I'm a pretty girl, Mama".

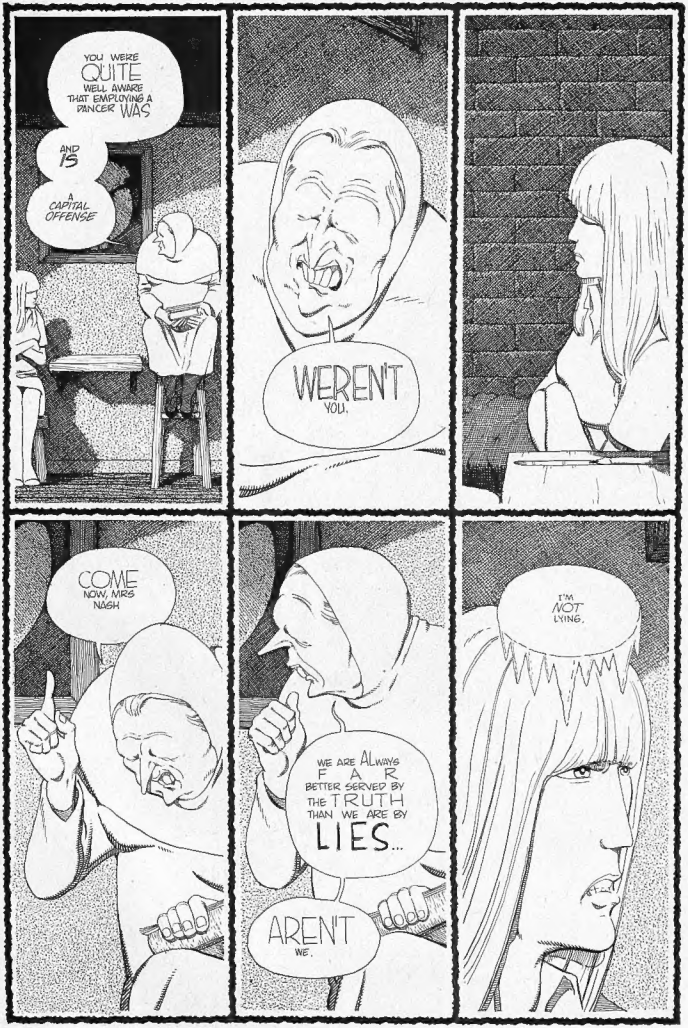
The skin smooth, unblemished, slightly flushed and nearly translucent; the crown of magnificent golden coils and flourishes, framing eyes (*her* eyes!) the colour of a clear summer sky; all these she saw; the compelling, mesmerising beauty, marred only by an expression of abject and sorrowful terror which (even as she recognized it), dissolved into a sheepish, radiant smile which warmed her inwardly even as she heard (as if from a great distance) the sound of a single clear and resonant chime.

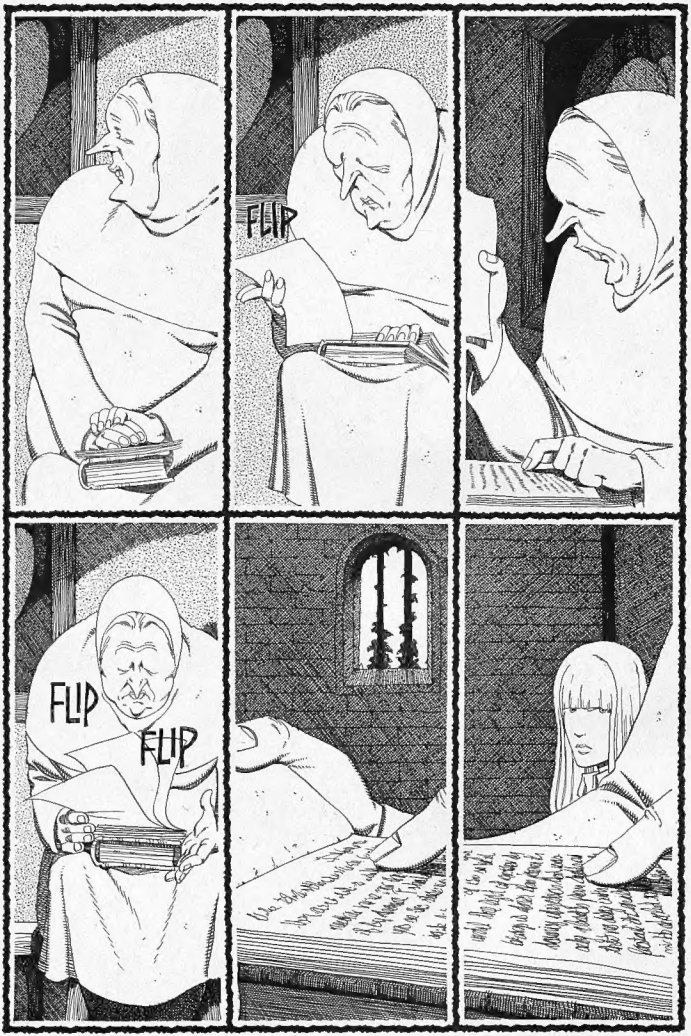
As the massive black doors split wide before her, she smiled an even more dazzling smile and strode forward; proud, erect and every inch the very picture of Tavers Womanhood at its finest.

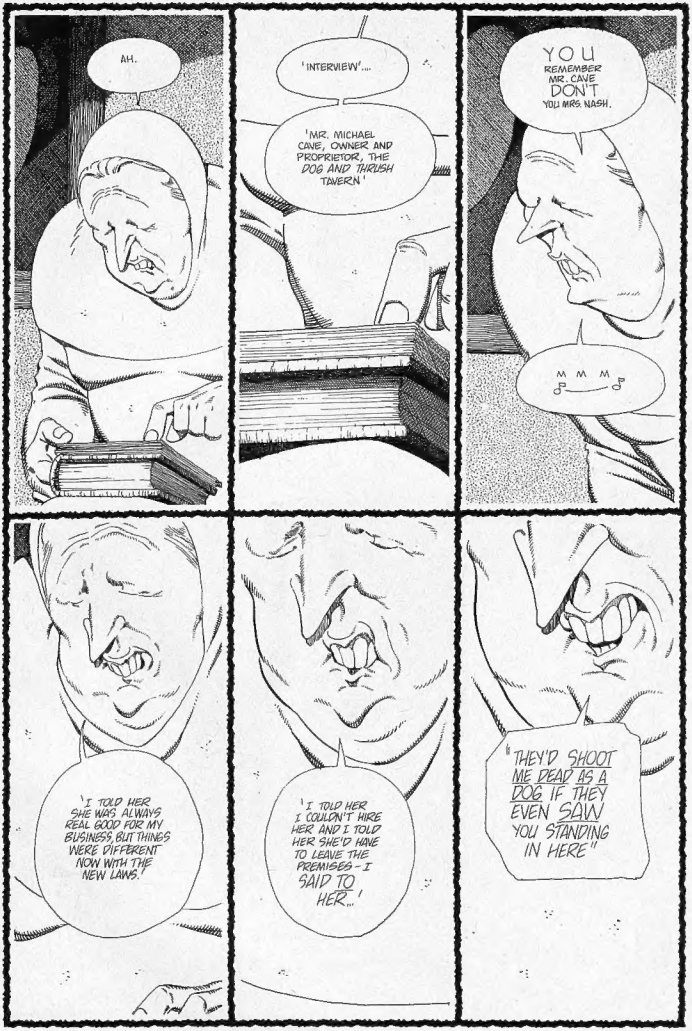


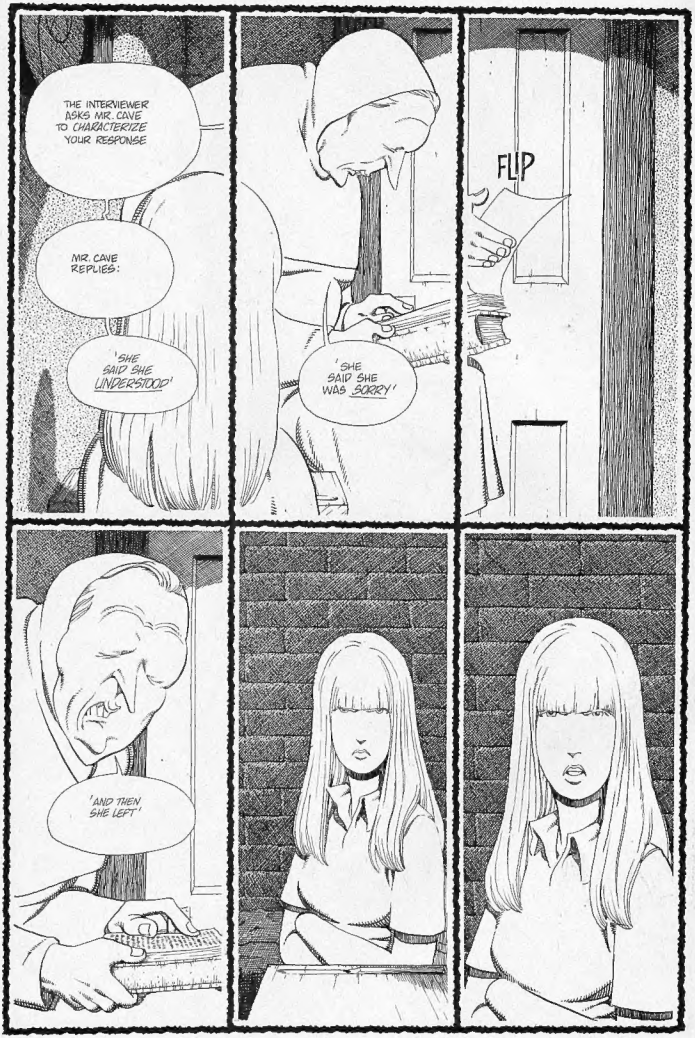
HOW AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR MR. WITHERS' DEATH?
THAT IS NO WAY TO REPLY TO A MORNING GREETING...
IS IT.
'GOOD MORNING MRS. NASH'
GOOD MORNING.
MRS. THATCHER.
NOW ALL OF THE WORDS TOGETHER
OH FOR THE LOVE OF...!
ALL OF THE WORDS TOGETHER PLEASE!


GOODMORNING MRSTHATCHER
IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION
(SIT UP STRAIGHT DEAR)
IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION
YOU KNEW THAT DANCING IN TAVERNS WAS ILLEGAL AND...
YOU KNEW THAT TO EMPLOY A DANCER WAS AGAINST THE LAW AS WELL
'AGAINST THE LAW', YES-- BUT I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO KILL HIM.
NOW YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT TRUE, MY DEAR


YOU WERE QUITE WELL AWARE THAT EMPLOYING A DANCER WAS
AND IS
A CAPITAL OFFENSE
WEREN'T YOU.
I'M NOT LYING.
COME NOW, MRS NASH
WE ARE ALWAYS F A R BETTER SERVED BY THE TRUTH THAN WE ARE BY LIES...
AREN'T WE.


FLIP
FLIP
FLIP


AH.
'INTERVIEW'....
'MR. MICHAEL CANE, OWNER AND PROPRIETOR, THE DOG AND THRUSH TAVERN.'
YOU REMEMBER MR. CAVE DON'T YOU MRS. NASH.
M M M
'I TOLD HER SHE WAS ALWAYS REAL GOOD FOR MY BUSINESS, BUT THINGS WERE DIFFERENT NOW WITH THE NEW LAWS.'
'I TOLD HER I COULDN'T HIRE HER AND I TOLD HER SHE'D HAVE TO LEAVE THE PREMISES - I SAID TO HER...'
"THEY'D SHOOT ME DEAD AS A DOG IF THEY EVEN SAW YOU STANDING IN HERE"


THE INTERVIEWER ASKS MR. CAVE TO CHARACTERIZE YOUR RESPONSE
MR. CAVE REPLIES:
'SHE SAID SHE UNDERSTOOD'
'SHE SAID SHE WAS SORRY'
FLIP
'AND THEN SHE LEFT'

YES?
MRS NASH.
PUD THOUGHT THE LAW WAS WRONG
HE WAS.
IT WAS A...
AN ACT OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE
YES
AN ACT OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Thatcher

Have you ever seen this book before, Mrs. Nash?

Nash

No.

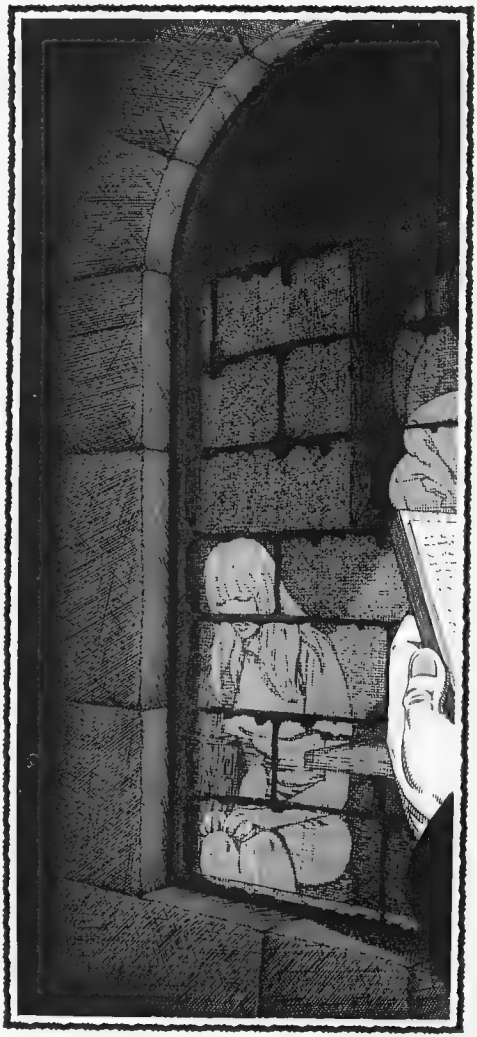
Thatcher

It belonged to Mr. Withers and was found among his personal effects by the officers who brought you here. Its frontispiece contains a dedication. 'To Pud Withers, loving son, from your loving mother Speranza Withers on your birthday. A home for all your sweet thoughts.' It is a diary of sorts, Mrs. Nash. Would you like to hear some of it?

"I wish I could express myself better, Mama, to say all the things I want to say and put everything into this book you have given me so I'll always remember everything. But I don't know how to write the smell of the morning air when the days start to turn cold or how to write the colour of wood smoke against the mountain just as the sun's going down. Even a big book like this isn't big enough to hold all the beautiful things in the world I see every day. But I will try."

A beautiful sentiment, don't you think, Mrs. Nash? Here's another one;

"I was mending the railing like you told me when the sun came out from behind the mountain. It caught the windows of the tavern for a few minutes from where I was so that the windows looked like they were filled with white light. And I just in a second thought that we are all here to catch the sun's light just that way;



that we should all be filled with a pure, white light, always. Thinking that made me tremble, Mama, and I started to cry."

So simple and yet so eloquent, Mrs. Nash. Don't you think?

"I watched a single leaf skip across the road. A brown, ordinary leaf and it stopped right at the edge of the road. It just lay there a while, tilting up and down and I felt I wanted to rescue it because it was going to fall. But just when it went over the edge a big wind caught it and blew it straight up, like it was a bird and it was flying. I thought that was so funny that I had wanted to save a leaf from falling and it was flying instead and I laughed right out loud."

(pause)

There is a somewhat shorter entry on the page after that; "Mama passed on. Sun-up today."

(pause)

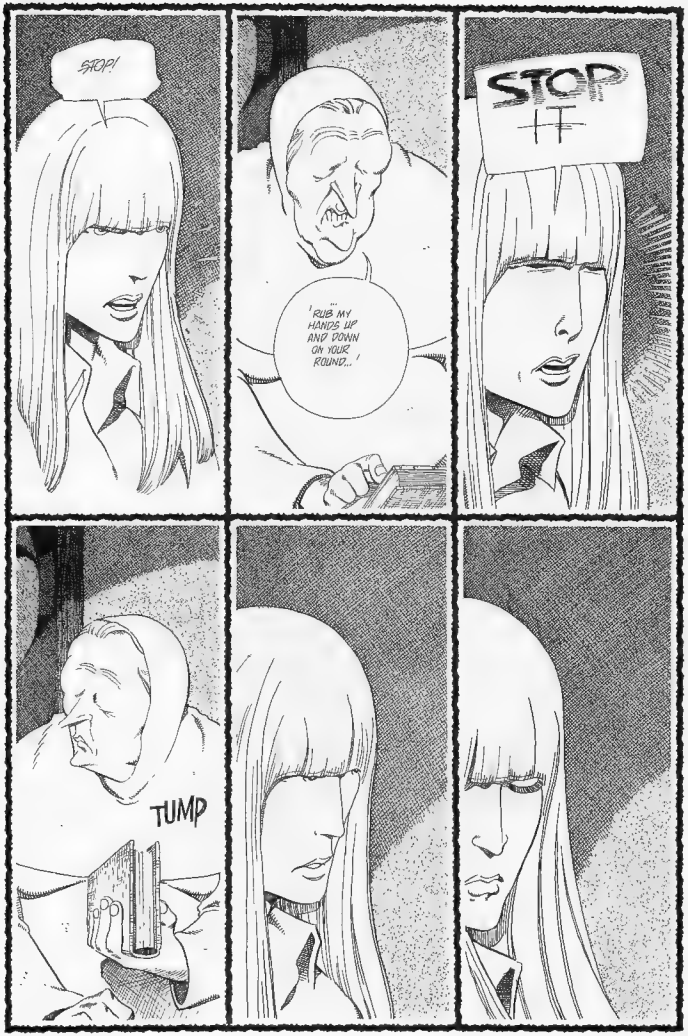
The next several pages are blank. When the entries resume they are gentle observations no longer. They are, instead, a series of letters of varying length addressed to you.

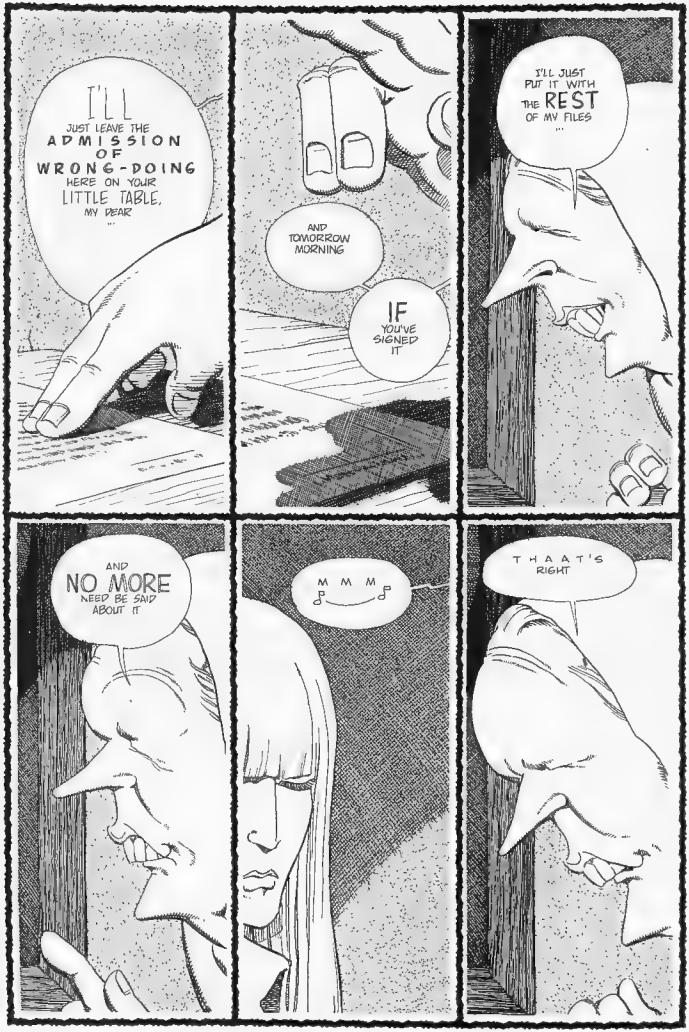
Nash

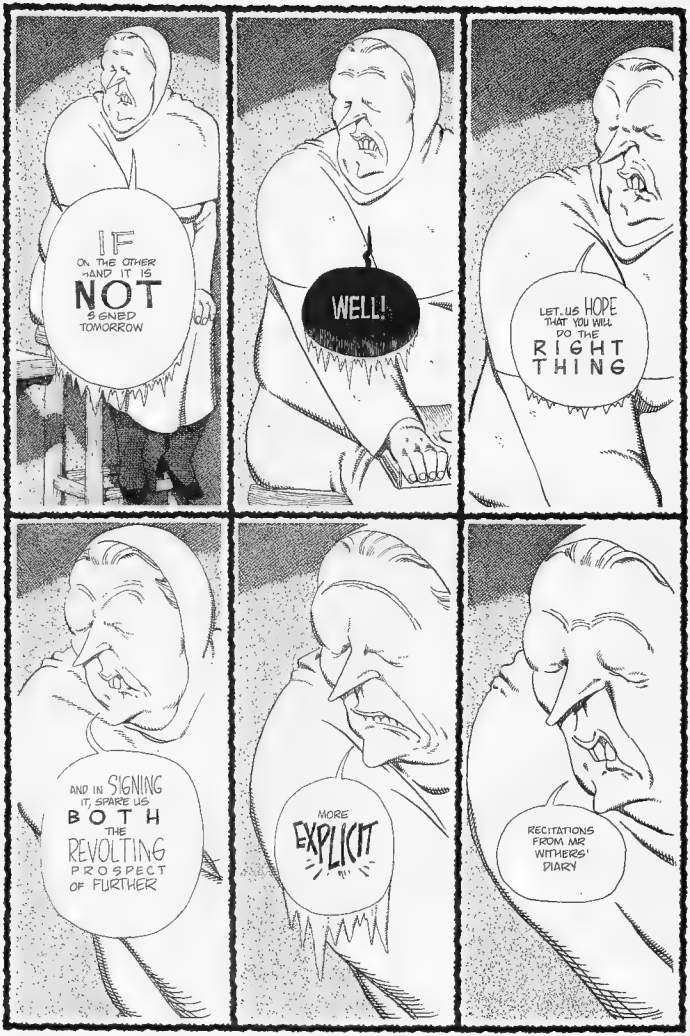
To *me*?

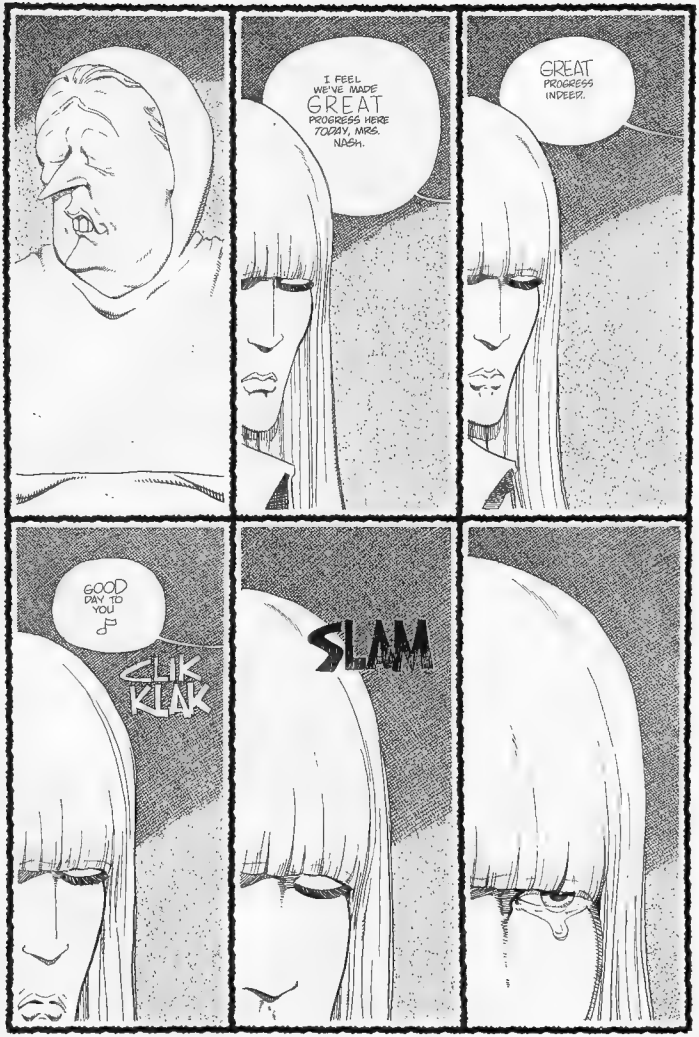
Thatcher

Yes. The first of them reads as follows. "Dear Miss Jaka; When you came into the tavern tonight and I saw your breasts and your bare naked legs and your white, white skin and I just wanted to pull off all your clothes, Miss Jaka and I wanted to rub my hands up and down on your

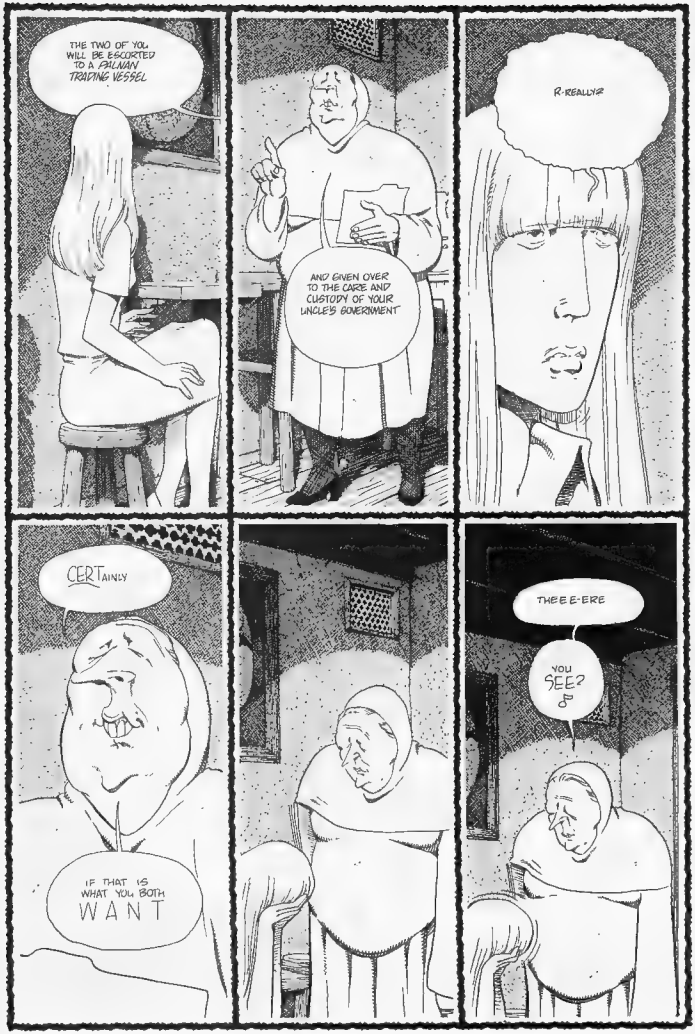

STOP!
'... RUB MY HANDS UP AND DOWN ON YOUR ROUND...'
STOP IT
TUMP

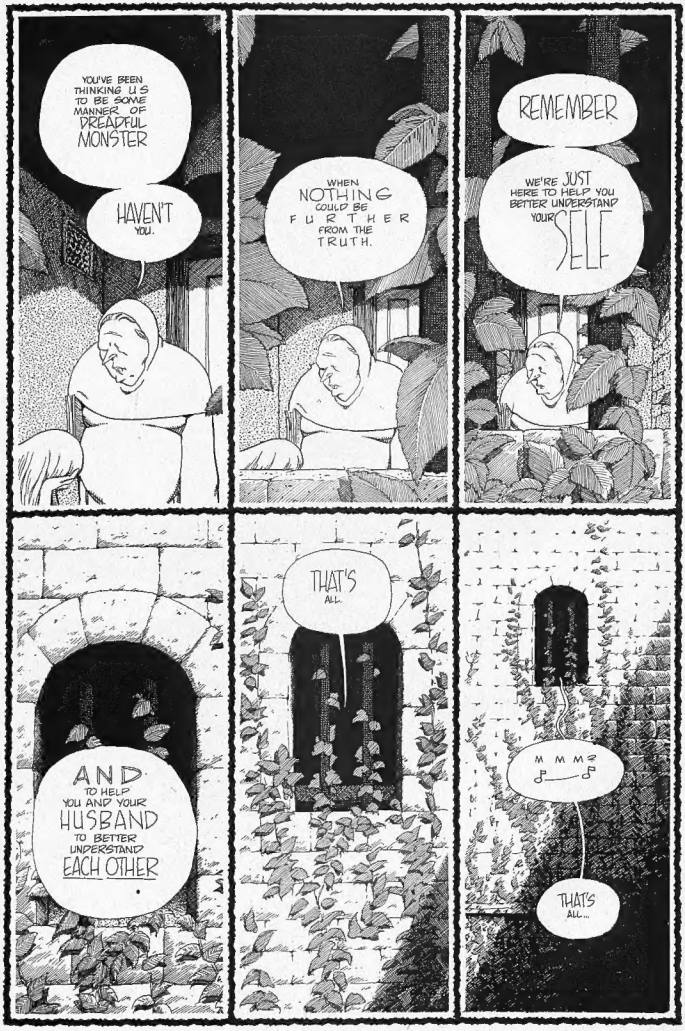

I'LL JUST LEAVE THE ADMISSION OF WRONG-DOING HERE ON YOUR LITTLE TABLE, MY DEAR ...
AND TOMORROW MORNING
IF YOU'VE SIGNED IT
I'LL JUST PUT IT WITH THE REST OF MY FILES ...
AND NO MORE NEED BE SAID ABOUT IT
M M M
T H A A T'S RIGHT


IF ON THE OTHER HAND IT IS NOT SIGNED TOMORROW
WELL!
LET US HOPE THAT YOU WILL DO THE RIGHT THING
AND IN SIGNING IT, SPARE US BOTH THE REVOLTING PROSPECT OF FURTHER
MORE EXPLICIT
RECITATIONS FROM MR WITHERS' DIARY


I FEEL WE'VE MADE GREAT PROGRESS HERE TODAY, MRS. NASH.
GREAT PROGRESS INDEED.
GOOD DAY TO YOU ♪
CLIK KLAK
SLAM

I HAVE SOME SPLENDID NEWS FOR YOU, MRS NASH...
YOUR HUSBAND IS ALIVE.
AND TOMORROW
AFTER WE THREE HAVE A LITTLE CHAT...


THE TWO OF YOU WILL BE ESCORTED TO A PALNAN TRADING VESSEL
AND GIVEN OVER TO THE CARE AND CUSTODY OF YOUR UNCLE'S GOVERNMENT
R-REALLY?
CERTainly
IF THAT IS WHAT YOU BOTH WANT
THEE E-ERE
YOU SEE?


YOU'VE BEEN THINKING US TO BE SOME MANNER OF DREADFUL MONSTER
HAVEN'T YOU.
WHEN NOTHING COULD BE F U R T H E R FROM THE TRUTH.
REMEMBER
WE'RE JUST HERE TO HELP YOU BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR SELF
AND TO HELP YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND TO BETTER UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER
THAT'S ALL.
M M M
THAT'S ALL...

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dave, All right. Enough. There are more stupid people in this world than you could shake a billion sticks at. This is why Sonic Youth's *Daydream Nation* is wailing like a cat in a bear trap behind me. Because I'm sick of people who mention rock groups in your letters column (including me). I'm sick of the dick fashion boys with corporate logos down their right sides who walk around as if anaesthetised by abnormal doses of Guns 'n' Roses and Milwaukee's Best. Who gives a *shit* about Pink Floyd quotes? Or about what their name used to be? Fuck them, man, it's Pink Floyd, Incorporated now. And ridiculous sexual jokes that work only if you subsist on Twinkies and late night television and run around telling everyone how funny you are and how well you could do David Letterman's job. Fuck you, you couldn't do his job because you can't even write a letter to a comic book without sounding like an idiot.

Just a little note to show everybody (by which I mean Dan and Lisa) that I'm still sane.

I'll tell you what, Dave, I read the "permit to write" scene right after reading an editorial in the *Rocky Mountain News* about how we need warning labels on rock and rap records and tapes and compact discs. It makes you want to run around in the streets handing out free copies of the Bill of Rights.

So there's this poll in *U.S. News and World Report* that says that 62 percent of this nation's citizens would be willing to give up a few of their freedoms if it meant that illegal drug use would be greatly reduced. And 52 percent would be willing to allow police to search the houses of suspected drug offenders without a search warrant even if it meant that they would occasionally accidentally search the wrong house. I'll say something now that I wouldn't say for a long time: I hate this country. I think the U.S.A. is cold and mean-spirited and I think everybody's civil liberties are about to go out the fucking Reagan-Bush-Message Window.

I mean, thank God Reagan's gone, at least. I spoke to a local priest here in the Springs who had just returned from Nicaragua. He had two dozen horror stories of citizens being maimed or killed by the *contras*. He sat there and told me about a 17 year old boy who fled to the jungles of Honduras because the *contras* give this ultimatum to boys that age before they can join the Sandinistas: join our army or your family dies. Under Reagan's misguided direction we gave hundreds of millions of dollars in military and nonmilitary aid. We criticise the economic misery under the Sandinistas, but we didn't give them a chance after the 1979 revolution—they had to spend money that could have been channeled toward social reform on the military to stop U.S opposition.

I'm not neccesarily pro-Sandinista—their officials run around in expensive cars and houses while the people starve—but the *contra* aid is something no one can justify. Now we're doing almost the same thing with the El Salvadoran government under Bush. Someone stop these people, before they kill everyone with whom they disagree.

Priests and nuns get killed by right-wing governments; bartenders and their customers get killed by Cirinists. The deaths of Pud and the old man hit me harder than anything in Jaka's Story so far.

Dylan Thomas died at thirty-nine and so did many other important people whom I cannot remember right now. People who share my birth date: Bob Marley, Ronald Reagan, James Dean, Tom Brokaw, Zsa Zsa Gabor. Two of them are dead, two of them should be, and Brokaw's all right.

It's getting kind of quiet in my city head, it takes a teen age riot to get me out of bed right now.

Mike Robbins
3590 Clubheights Drive
Colorado Springs, CO
USA 80906

****

Hello,

Nice twister you threw in the story line there Dave. Poor Pud. I mean poor Mr. Withers. He got Guts, only now they are on the floor. This was such a shocking turn of events, turn of a page, turn of my comfortable place in existence, that I simply had to laugh, laugh at myself and the hysterical proportions of complacent self-deception that keep me from believing that you are really there behind the storyline, manipulating it, and consequently, juggling my emotional state so well that I have become prey to something so trivial, and so profound as a comic book. You have demonstrated the absurdity of life, and shown how existence is precious, even Pud's, I mean Mr. Withers', who's got guts, spilled on the floor. I laughed because there is a hidden joke in the pictures that is too big to see. My compliments, Pud is dead, and you truly are a mocking fiend, hovering somewhere, unable, yourself, to bring him back.

Tom Clark
1 Glen St.
Voorheesville, NY
USA 12186

****

Kjaere Dave:

Du er sikkert drittlei all den hemningsløse rosen (en konspirasjon ledet av Weishaupts lik, uten tvil), men Cerebus er et mesterverk, og det vet du godt. Din jævel.

Den grå grisen er den eneste jeg vet om som klarer så til de grader å se *frustrert* ut. Det er det som har imponert meg mest de 7 årene jeg har fulgt med I serien.

Jaka er en oppblast palme, men søt likevel.

Tro ikke et jeg ikke vet at du kan forstå dette. Det drøsser av norske ord I relevante sammenhenger: "SNORK" (#94, 117). Dead giveaways. Dessuten klarer du vel ikke å motstå fristelsen til å trykke et brev som dette?

A. Noen kan oversette for deg.
B. Alle skandinaver får et kick.
C. Du kan svare på japansk.
E. Kunst er meningsløst, forståelse likeså. Fuck the rest!Med mindre du er en "boring old fart". Og det tviler jeg på: "boring: kanskje, men ikke "old". OK? På forhånd takk for alt, og gå nå ikke hen å dø før 2004. Verdener står på spill.

Skoeske briljant,
Ghud Egil Haraldsson Stenseth
PO Box 105-Blindern
N-0314 OSLO 3, Norway

****

Dear Dave,

Issue 130!

"Jaka's Story" lulled me: leisurely pace, lyrical narrative, the slowly unfolding minutiae of past and present relationships. Lots of good stuff to pick through and ponder. Then issue 130: what an

effective contrast! Sudden death, and unexpectedly everything jolts into high gear. Made me think, "Yep, this is *Cerebus*, all right." Oh, Jaka. Those deadly Cirinists could use her dance.

Jaka vis-a-vis Cerebus: When I was in third and fourth grade, I had an unrelenting crush on a boy in my class named Joe Carroll. My family moved away during the summer before fifth grade, and I always felt that the move had somehow perverted fate. I feel kinda the same way about Jaka and Cerebus. They seem sometimes to be the two halves of a sundered whole. Like the *Cerebus* cosmos.

Plus, their pairing seems potentially more in balance than either the Astoria-Cerebus or the—shudder—Sophia-Cerebus pair. But maybe that's just because I've always been fond of Jaka. Which makes me wonder: Do you have a favourite of the three? Does Ger? Has you choice of favourite changed over time?

Carolyn Hill
Berkeley, CA

P.S. About your note that answers on the letters page can prevent letters. Yep. One reason I didn't write back after my last letter was printed is because, as you say, a short printed answer to a printed letter can "make it appear that the answer was a devasting rejoinder or, at least, the last word on the subject." The other reason is because I hadn't anything to say.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave & Gerhard,

Just when I'm getting nice and comfortable with the characters, their relation to one another, and engrossed in the very wordy recount of Jaka's early life, just when I'm settled in, and FOR ONCE, can keep up with you-you FUCK with my brain! Nice throw-unfortunately, I was 1/2 asleep and 1/2 watching Late Night with David Letterman at the time. You woke me up quite abruptly with #130. The last page is dear to my heart-"No artistic license." I don't suppose you'd consider selling the original to a poor, starving grad-student who might be able to scrape together some bucks, would you?

I was doing well, even the withdrawl symptoms had subsided. Life is hell when you're living on a stipend and have to choose very wisely when and where to spend those few extra $-the choice is between comics & beer and for 2 quarters (terms, whatever-approx. 6 months) the beer won. So what happened? I'm sure you're dying to know. After 2 quarters of B.S. work, doing what I've had to do, writing papers that didn't agree with me-well, I've finally come down to the line. My thesis gets written this week! THIS WEEK! My Masters (M.A.) exam is 3 weeks away. 12 years of public school, 4 years of college (interim of 2 years, for a couple of nasty jobs) and now another *crammed* year for my grad-school degree and it's all coming down to the next few weeks! What do I do to give myself a treat? A break? A boost? A reward? I blow some bucks on comic books, sit down and read your creation cover to cover (to cover, etc....for all the issues I've missed these past months), and vow never to miss an issue again! Even if it does mean one less beer a month!

Apologies for my handwriting this. Typed letters seem so impersonal and insincere to me. This being my first 'fan' letter, well-like I said, typed things seem so impersonal.

Since all my back-issues are in safe-keeping with my kid sister in California while I'm in this hell hole (Chicago) and in between 'permanent' residences-well, I can't go back to some of the old letters pages and I've missed something. Who the hell is Cassandra the Witch? I'm only slightly offended by her because Cassandra is/was the *Sorceress* (not a witch) in Northern California. I'm also slightly annoyed by her presence and attention in the letters pages. You know us female types: someone else is getting attention and immediately the fur gets ruffled.

—Enough: Let's be intellectual now.

Mr. Sim, you and Gerhard are a great team. I'm an art history major with an emphasis on contemporary art. Yours is a most welcome display of talent and creativity. It's a shame that 'High Art' (capital 'H' and capital 'A') is determined, mostly, by economics and cocktail fad.

If this gets printed, a note to the letter page readers-

Take heart there are some women who *aren't* conniving, heartless bitches and who still fall into the good-looking category; just as I know there are fellow Cerebus cult-ies of the opposite gender (male), who aren't dweeby, broken-hearted smart-ass wankers.

Here's to you, Dave and Ger.

Alexis Camacho
Chicago, ILL

P.S. OK, the thesis didn't get written (it'll have to wait until April) and I admit, I'm damned lucky to have a stipend.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Greetings from the virginal N.Y.C. I'm here on the second leg of my SPRING BREAK WORLD TOUR '90, and picked up #130 at Forbidden Planet. Holy Shit, Dave! You've delivered up the biggest shock in the city! And, this is the first time I've laughed at Cerebus since Julius came back; namely "artistic license".

INDEED!

Your pal,
John Freitas

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

As a doctor, I and the world at large want to know when the hell Woody Allen is going to wander into the pages of "Cerebus" and irritate the fuck out of everyone. He'd be a perfect foil for Lord Groucho.

As a psychologist, I can tell you that if you can't manage Woody Allen, then Bob Crumb would be almost as good.

As a long-time comics fan, we all know that DC offered you a six-figure sum for "Cerebus". But what fandom wants to know is whether Jeanette Kahn gave you a blowjob or not.

Yours,

Reverso-Malcolm Bourne
Deepest, darkest London.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave:

I'm pissed off. Let me tell you why.

It was late at night, and my friend Ron had been kind enough to drive both me and Carson to a fast food place because we were both hungry. (It was nice of him, because it was his gas in the car, and he had already eaten at home.) Anyway, after a little deliberation it was decided that a McDonald's would have to serve.

So we drove to the neighbourhood set of golden arches, and because we were too tired to play with small bills after one guy had ordered for all three of us, we decided to avoid the drive-thru and go inside to do the business in person. So there I was, standing at a cash register at midnight with this seventeen year old girl looking at me with acne on her face and a McDonald's hat on her head.

What I wanted was three of those small, paper wrapped hamburgers they sell for 99¢ apiece. The girl seemed to think this was reasonable, because without hesitation she punched some buttons on her cash register and then looked around to the hotrack where, under ideal conditions, there would be a bunch of burgers sitting, waiting to be dispensed. Conditions, this night however were not ideal, because there was only one of those paper-wrapped hamburgers sitting there, and I wanted three. So she turned back to me and said that I'd have to wait for five minutes while they made two more to fill my order.

I was about to nod and say okay when I

HAPPY 18th
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ASTORIA
DOESN'T LOOK A DAY OVER TWELVE, DOES SHE?